

The Times of India

Title : Paani ATMs: Water idea, sirji

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You can see them in almost every village in drought-hit Marathwada -people, especially women and children, walking miles to fetch a single pot of water.

But tiny Patoda, on the fringes of water-starved Aurangabad city, is different. It is surrounded by arid villages but people here just go to the water ATM nearby to get their share of potable water.

Patoda's residents have learnt a valuable lesson -that water is more precious than money . They follow strict rules about usage and water audits are stringent. Households have water meters and the entire village recycles every drop of waste water it generates. So effective is its water conservation model that Patoda has now become a model for the rest of Marathwada.

“It didn't happen overnight. We have been working for the last 10-12 years to ensure that every raindrop is saved and no water, not even waste, flows out of our village. The water balance sheet you see today is the result of strict discipline,” says Bhaskar Pere-Patil, who developed the water model which has won 22 state and national awards. “The drought in Marathwada is man-made. People have failed to make efficient use of available water or recycle it. If Israel can perform miracles in its arid land, why can't we?” Pere-Patil asks.

Patoda's story is the stuff film scripts are made of. It used to be a filthy village that suffered perennial water shortage. Pere-Patil, who has only studied till Class VII, was once a local hooligan who terrorized villagers into voting for him as sarpanch. In the years when he headed the village, he did nothing for it.

Then one day, 10 years ago, Pere Patil happened to overhear villagers talking about him. “I was shocked to learn that people saw me as some kind of a wild animal. I realized that they showed me deference only because I had money and muscle. I would earn their respect only if I did something for them,” says Pere-Patil.

Not only did he decide to change himself, but he also set about driving change in the village. His first initiative was to stop open defecation. Then came the troubling issue of water.

“Initially, we went along only because we were afraid of him. But after some time, we realized that he is genuinely trying to change himself and the village,” say the women. They soon joined his mission.

The Kham River, which flows past the village, had been reduced to a nullah with unchecked release of sewage and effluents. The wells had no potable water and the government water supply scheme was neither enough nor potable.

“We were forced to look elsewhere for a solution. We could not generate water, but we could certainly conserve what we get. The first step was saving rainwater by building several bunds across the nullahs. Today , no rain water flows out of our village. Percolation has recharged the aquifers and the water table has risen,” says Pere-Patil.

Once water was available in village wells, the gram panchayat decided to set up a water filtration plant on its own. Then came the concept of a water meter and ATM machine. Though there were government funds for various schemes the core contribution came from the villagers.

Today , the gram panchayat provides 20 litres of filtered mineral water free to all the 581 families that use ATM cards. The machine operates 24x7 through the year. “It will never be empty. We have

deposited all our effort in it," says youngster Ravindra Jadhav as he inserts a card into the slot to draw 20 litres of water.

Additional filtered water is available through metered water supply at Rs 5 per 1,000 litres. Water from the government supply scheme and some wells is used for washing and cleaning.



- Bunds built to save rain water
- Stabilisation ponds set up. Here, multiple forms of bacteria and algae act together to clean waste water which is then used for farming
- Water meters installed to curb use



OPINION » LEAD

Published: May 2, 2016 01:18 IST | Updated: May 2, 2016 01:47 IST May 2, 2016

Parched earth, broken promises



• [Brinda Karat](#)



The Hindu

Photo shows the people of Ukhandia village in Beed district waiting for a water tanker. Photo: Vivek Bendre

Ground reports from Marathwada give the lie to the government's claims that it is doing everything it can to address the drought situation

How would Janabai Korde or Prabhakar Bhumre have responded to the government's claims made in the Rajya Sabha that the Centre was doing everything it could to address the grave drought situation in 257 districts across India? The two are residents of Beed and Jalna in Marathwada, the region comprising the eight districts worst hit by a three-year drought, and which has now reached epic proportions.

Janabai Korde is the sarpanch of a village in Beed. Our team met her when, as part of the Kisan Sabha campaign in the Marathwada region, we were interacting with workers at Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) worksites. With agricultural work at a standstill, the only lifeline here is MGNREGA. The Central government had declared that the provision of work under MGNREGA would be extended from 100 to 150 days in all drought-affected areas. But this has not happened. In 2015-2016, according to the Ministry website, in five of the districts — Aurangabad, Jalna, Nanded, Osmanabad and Hingoli — the average days of work in each of the districts was just 47 days or lower. In Latur it was 72 days, and in Beed, 81.

MGNREGA and a fund trickle

Even though lakhs of landless agricultural workers, cane cutters and marginal farmers are desperately looking for work, the number of individuals who actually got work under MGNREGA last year was just 70,000 people or fewer in each district. The only exception was in Beed, where 1.19 lakh individual workers got work. This month, when demand is at its peak, the average figure in each district is just 4,000. Officials tell you, off the record, that the main reason is the Central government's refusal to release adequate funds. For the State as a whole, the funds from the Centre in 2015-2016 have been less, by Rs.212 crore, than what was spent in the pre-drought year of 2012-2013.

What is equally appalling is that even those who got work did not get wages. Beed district, with a comparatively better record of providing work, was the worst in terms of the disbursement of wages. Last year, the government owed workers Rs.5.58 crore in terms of wages in this district. At a worksite where we met Ms. Korde in her village of Takarwan, 150 workers had not been paid even a paisa since the project began a month-and-a-half ago. In the searing heat, with scarce drinking water, the women are expected to dig and carry 5,000 kg of mud in a single workday of eight hours. Can there be a more inhuman work norm than this? It is an impossible task. Officials admit that because of the drought, the soil has become hard and stony. But the schedule of rates — that is the work norms which determine the piece-rated wages — has not been changed. As a result, workers will get around 30 per cent less than the minimum wage, unless they extend the workday to 11 or 12 hours. Ms. Korde has been fighting on behalf of the workers. She has also raised the crucial issue of food security. Emergency measures to provide food grains through the Public Distribution System are urgently required, she says, but who is listening?

Landless and agricultural workers, the vast majority of whom are Dalit, are obviously the worst hit but the plight of farmers is no better.

Farmers in distress

Prabhakar Bhumre is a farmer from Jalna district. Like many others here, he was a fruit grower with 400 orange trees. He had taken a loan of Rs.2 lakh over two years. But in spite of the large amounts he paid to private companies for water to be supplied, he could not save his trees from drying up. Ultimately, he had to cut them down. His is not an isolated case. In the district, orange trees which were planted over 9,000 hectares — which is more than a third of the land where these trees have been planted — have had to be cut down. But there is little government help. Nor have the majority of fruit growers in the region received any compensation. On the contrary, banks are sending notices to farmers like Mr. Bhumre across Marathwada demanding repayment. The despair is palpable and 325 farmers have committed suicide in this region since January this year.

We had met Mr. Bhumre at a cattle sale in Pachod in Aurangabad district where he had sold two pairs of bullocks. Sitting in a group of distraught farmers, he was dejected and close to tears. He had sold the animals, bought for Rs.1 lakh a year or so ago, for just Rs.20,000. Another farmer, Salar Khan, had a similar story. He had sold a pair of bullocks for half the price he had paid for them. In debt, for Rs.90,000, his daughters have had to drop out of school. After the ban on cow slaughter imposed by the Bharatiya Janata Party-led government, the price of these animals has plummeted throughout the State. In the Marathwada region, the situation is further accentuated by the high cost of maintenance. There were around 3,000 heads of cattle brought for sale to this fair — a distress sale is a last-ditch survival strategy. They had no alternative.

Short changed

The cattle shelters set up under a government scheme could have provided some relief. But the government outsourced them to a variety of registered cooperatives. In Beed district, where the late BJP leader Gopinath Munde's two daughters fought and won the election, there are 137 such cow shelters, the highest in the region. One of the bigger shelters, in Kej, with 1,400 animals, is run by the Jai Bajrang Bali society which has not received funds since it started in March. According to the supervisor, the running cost is close to Rs.1 lakh a day.

How do they manage, we asked. Through more loans, he said. However, others said that many of these registered societies do not give out the actual amount of fodder that a farmer is entitled to. The government subsidy to be provided in kind, and fodder and water for the animals is set at the rate of Rs.70 for a large animal and Rs.31 for a small one. But, in a bizarre policy decision, the government cuts Rs.8 of the subsidy per animal against the price for the manure that the owner is presumed to get, from the sale of the manure. This has infuriated cattle owners. One asked, "Did a government officer measure the manure of my cow before he cut eight rupees?"

In most districts, the scheme for cattle shelters has not taken off. Clearly, it is the government that should run these shelters in greater numbers for a specified period and the Central government needs to provide assistance for this. No assurances were made in the parliamentary debate.

Water politics

While the [flagging off of a water train to Latur](#) has had a blaze of publicity, the reality is that the 3,000 tankers provided in the region are woefully inadequate. There is no regulation of the price of water being charged by private companies. It is Rs.1,000 for a 3,000-litre tanker, double the amount it costs in Delhi. It is an open secret that many of these private water companies have close contacts with different political leaders of the area, which is the reason why no one dares touch them.

The priorities of the BJP-led State government lie elsewhere. On April 26, the Aurangabad bench of the Bombay High Court [heard a petition asking for a reduction of water supply to breweries and distilleries](#). Aurangabad is an important centre for beer production and these units require more than five million litres of water a day. When the matter was raised in the Assembly, the Minister for Rural Development in the State, Pankaja Munde, refused the demand for cuts to these units. She was later accused of putting the interests of the company, of which she is a director and which runs a distillery, before those of the people. The court though directed the government to give priority to ensuring drinking water to the region.

The absence of any sense of urgency by government agencies is glaring. During the Lok Sabha and later the Assembly elections, Prime Minister Narendra Modi made a slew of promises to farmers and residents of Marathwada — from writing off loans, to ensuring crop compensation, to guaranteeing the supply of water and 24-hour supply of electricity. His party won six of the eight Lok Sabha seats and increased its tally of Assembly seats from two to 15 (out of 46) in a region known to be a Congress-Nationalist Congress Party base. But today, every one of those promises remains unfulfilled. Mr. Modi should spare a few days from his busy schedule of foreign tours to visit and study the situation here. That would help him understand why Janabai and Bhumre may consider his government's claims, at least as far as short-term measures are concerned, to be a straight lie.

Brinda Karat is a member of the CPI(M) Polit Bureau and a former Rajya Sabha MP.

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DATA

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LAST DROP: WATER TABLE

Drilling for their lives



• [Sharad Vyas](#)



Reuters

A girl carries a metal pitcher filled with water through a field in Latur.

The summer of 2016 has seen vast tracts of the country wilting under a scorching heat wave and water availability has been the first casualty. Regions such as Marathwada, Bundelkhand, Telangana, and northern Karnataka are reeling under drought-like conditions. The situation was already grim in late 2015, when 57 per cent of the control wells across the country monitored by the Central Groundwater Board saw a fall in water levels relative to the year before. Given that the last year's monsoon presented a 14 per cent shortfall and was the worst since 2009, this year's drought-like conditions are taking a serious toll on the water table. Parched villages and cities, driven to desperation, have plunged headlong into a borewell-digging spree. From Mumbai to Hyderabad, borewell operators are frenetically drilling, sometimes against municipal regulations and bans, to below 400 or 500 feet, yet not always hitting water. In most of these parts a vicious cycle has taken root, where deeper borewells are driving water even further beneath the ground. In part this is because in the Deccan area, unlike the Gangetic plain, there is less alluvial soil but there are more rock formations that are not conducive to water table recharge.

A warm sun baked the parched land as Harishchandra Yorme trudged towards a far corner of his farm to take stock of the livestock feasting on a patch of vegetation, the leftover from the vagaries of a poor monsoon. It had been a cruel summer. The fruit farmer stopped in the shade of a tree to rest and scoffed at the expanse in front of his eyes.

The view alternated dry vegetation with dozens of ugly pipes, a painful reminder of two consecutive seasons of drought that forced Yorme to sink 12 borewells, some as deep as 800 feet into the arid land. "This was filled with over 3,000 sweet lime trees, before these [borewells] came up in an attempt to survive the drought," he said with a faraway look in his eyes.

At last count, as many as 63 borewells dotted Yorme's fruit farm in Jagalpur village of Jalkot taluka, Latur district, where an extended drought has devastated crops of several farmers.

Even a local *panadi*, or water diviner, brought from nearby Osmanabad district to conduct a customary ritual could not change Yorme's fortune. "He spun coconuts and sticks to identify two spots across the field, but the water never came out of it. I swore never to depend on [borewells] for irrigation. That was the last time I dug any," he said with a wry smile.

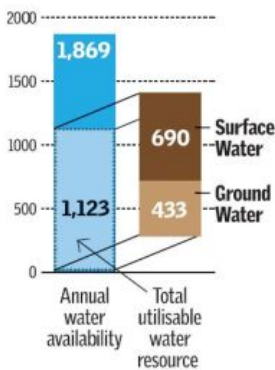
The rules permit the digging of only five borewells every one square kilometre with a depth of not more than 200 feet. With the total district area of 715 sq km, the number of borewells in Latur should ideally not cross 3,575.

FACTS ON THE GROUND

A look into data on groundwater use in the country presents a rather alarming picture

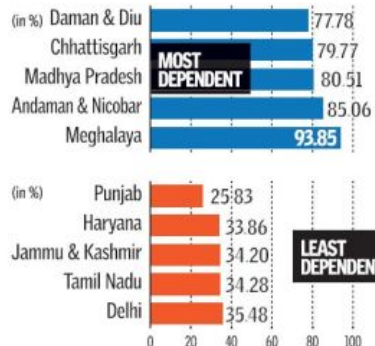
Water availability in India

Figures in billion cubic metres (BCM)



Groundwater dependence on monsoon*

58% of groundwater in India is recharged via rains during the monsoon months



Where is groundwater used?



*Source: Central Ground Water Board, Dynamic Ground Water Resources of India, (as on 31st March, 2011)

Yet there are 90,000 borewells here even as the official count of the ground water survey authority stands at a measly 34,778, experts said. "The groundwater levels have sunk in so rapidly that people have dug borewells as deep as 1,300 feet to fetch water, destroying the deep aquifers which take years to refill," said Atul Deulgaonkar, environmentalist and author.

He added, "In Marathwada, it is estimated that 10,000 new borewells are sunk every month, with most people suffering from a 'drought mentality' that urges them to store water even when not needed." As a consequence the average fall in the groundwater levels last five years has been around 5.56 metres.

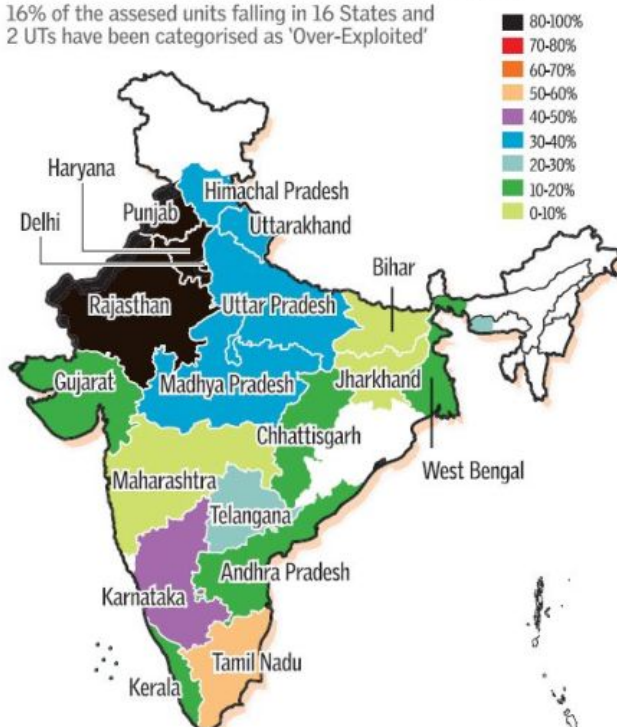
Warnings have also been sounded against over-extracting groundwater in Latur and Osmanabad for irrigating water-intensive cash crops such as sugarcane, banana, grapes and oranges. Even where farmers knew the disadvantages of borewell irrigation — low dependability of yield, low discharge and recuperation rate — they still opted for these crops.

The government has undertaken schemes like Jal Yukta Shivar to artificially recharge depleting water bodies and make 5,000 villages drought free every year. But its impact will only be known after a good monsoon.

Groundwater exploitation across India

% of sites falling under Over Exploited/Critical/Semi-critical categories

16% of the assessed units falling in 16 States and 2 UTs have been categorised as 'Over-Exploited'



Categorisation based on ratio of annual ground water extraction to annual ground water availability. **Over Exploited:** >100% | **Critical:** 90-100% | **Semi-critical:** 70-90% | **Source:** Parliamentary Questions

○ In the states of Delhi, Haryana, Punjab and Rajasthan, annual ground water consumption is more than annual groundwater recharge. Over the years, usage of groundwater has increased in areas where the resource was readily available.

Difficult to regulate groundwater

○ The Easement Act, 1882 provides every landowner with the right to collect and dispose, within his own limits, all water under the land and on the surface. This makes it difficult to regulate extraction of groundwater as it is owned by the person to whom the land belongs.

"In Marathwada, the scant monsoon culminated in low storage capacity in dams and water bodies even as water brought lots of silt along with it. The state should have better extended at the village and taluka level an outreach programme to remove silt from the water bodies, that never happened," said Director of Central Ground Water Board, P.K. Jain.

The indiscriminate exploitation of ground water, poor maintenance of water bodies, construction of new check dams and storage tanks at an

indiscriminate pace also restricted the natural flow of water in recharge, storage and discharge areas of the Marathwada terrain, experts believe.

In Latur, the groundwater levels in the eastern regions of Jalkot, Udgir and Ahmedpur have dipped alarmingly compared to the greener west, where the water from major dams and barrages keeps the land replenished.

“The indiscriminate construction of artificial water bodies and check dams by the government made matters worse,” said BG Dhokarikar, water consultant and former Director of State GSDA (1988-1991).

But this could change soon if lessons are not learn fast.

A ground report from Latur and a detailed infographic on ground water availability and borewell exploitation across the country in the first of a six part series.

Printable version | May 3, 2016 5:01:23 PM | <http://www.thehindu.com/data/last-droppart-1-villagers-digging-borewells-to-escape-drought/article8551235.ece>

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2 anti-dam activists shot in Arunachal

Itanagar/Guwahati: Two anti-dam protesters were killed and eight others, including a Buddhist monk, injured in police firing in Arunachal Pradesh's Tawang district on Monday.

The protesters were shot as they tried to storm a police station trying to seek the release of a Lama jailed for anti-dam protest in the sensitive border town. "Police shot at supporters of an arrested anti-dam activist, Lama Lobsang Gyatso, as they tried to force his release," Itanagar IGP Nabin Payeng told TOI.

Lama Lobsang was arrested on April 28 after a video went viral showing him accusing the abbot of Tawang Monastery, Guru Tulku Rinpoche, of indulging in hydro-power politics. Lama Lobsang heads Save Mon Region Federation (SMRF), a group opposed to hydel projects in Tawang district which China claims as its own.

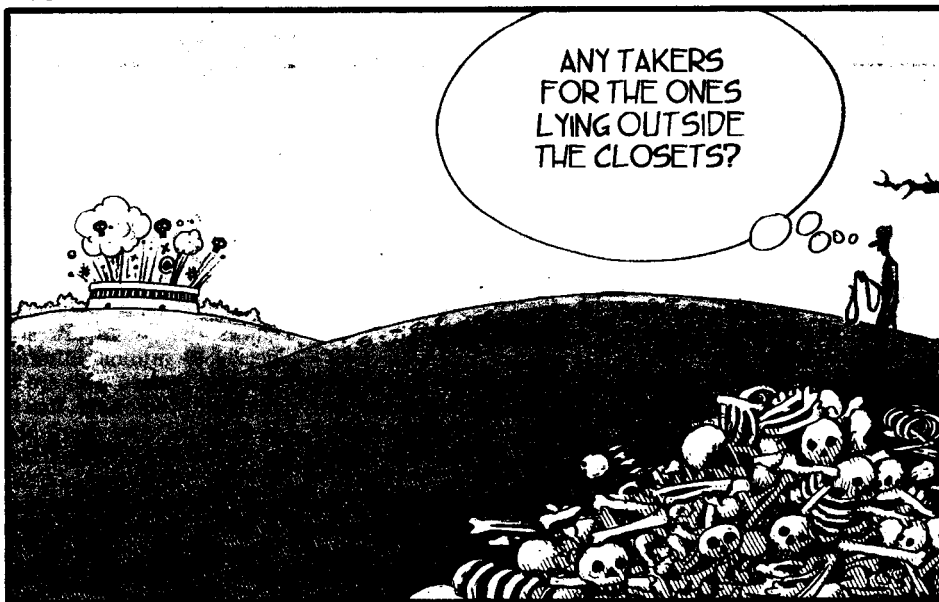
On April 7, National Green Tribunal had suspended environmental clearance to the 780 mw Nyamjang Chhu hydel project after SMRF lobbied against it. Union minister Kiren Rijiju directed top district officials to take stock of the situation. **TNN**

LINE OF NO CONTROL

TUE APR 30 2016

SANDEEP ADHWARYU

AGUSTA DOMINATES LOK SABHA AS HUNDREDS DIE IN DROUGHT-HIT AREAS



Only 2% of water left in Marathwada dams

Priyanka Kakodkar
@timesgroup.com

Mumbai: There is only 2% of water left in dams in drought-struck Marathwada, with a month and a half to go before the monsoon sets in.

Eight of the region's 11 major dams are at dead storage level. Water from the dams has to be lifted as it cannot flow out. The Manjara and Lower Terna dams have run totally dry.



Last year at this time, the water level in those dams was higher at 10%. This is the fourth year of drought in Marathwada in the last five years. The state government says there is enough water to last the region till monsoon. "We are hopeful the monsoon will come earlier," said state water resources minister Girish Mahajan.

Rainfall across the state has been deficient since 2014. Dams across the state have

only 16% water left, compared to 27% at this time in 2015. Dam water levels in north and western Maharashtra have halved compared to last year. Water levels in western Maharashtra's dams have dropped from 32% to 16% at this time last year.

Activist Kishor Tiwari, who is heading a task force for farmers, said the government should enforce a cutback in cultivation of water-guzzling sugarcane in favour of more sustainable crops.

Rs. 3,000 cr. for projects to clean up the Ganga

PUJA MEHRA

NEW DELHI: Ahead of the Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections slated for early next year and a day after Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited his Lok Sabha constituency, Varanasi, the Expenditure Finance Committee on Monday approved projects worth nearly Rs. 3,000 crore for the government's flagship programme, Namami Gange.

This is the biggest-ever approval for projects meant to clean up the Ganga — till now a total of Rs. 4,000 crore has been spent on cleaning the



FLAGSHIP PROGRAMME: So far Rs. 4,000 crore has been spent on cleaning the Ganga since 1985. — PHOTO: RANJEET KUMAR

river through many governments since 1985. A decision has been taken to fast-track the integrated Ganga conservation programme, a year after the Union Cabinet ap-

proved it in May 2015. Mr. Modi, who launched on Sunday environment friendly e-boats at the Assi Ghat of the Ganga in Varanasi, is expected to review the progress af-

ter the end of the current session of Parliament.

Uma Bharti meets CM

In a series of steps planned to speed up implementation, Water Resources Minister Uma Bharti met Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav in Lucknow on Sunday.

A meeting of the general body of the National Mission for Clean Ganga has also been called next Monday, a senior Ministry official told *The Hindu*.

This will be the first meeting of the body since it was set up in 2010. The post of its

43 Mission Director that had been lying vacant for months was filled last week.

"Momentum is being built in the programme so that the river can be cleaned by 2018...while it will not be possible, by then, to put in place sewage networks connecting every house in the cities along the course of the river, it will be ensured that sewage will be intercepted in every town at the main drains and treated," the source said.

Rajat Bhargava, a Joint Secretary in the Water Resources Ministry, has been appointed the new Mission Director.

Forest fires

98

A natural phenomenon we can no more afford

13

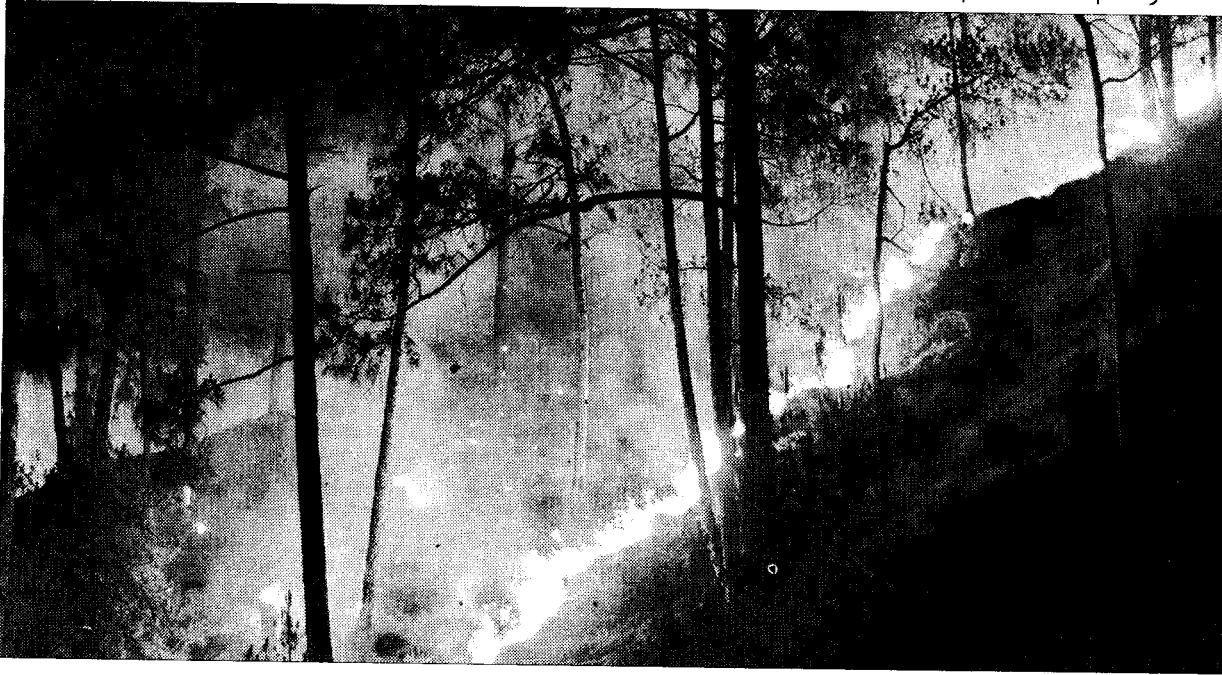
THE raging fires in the forests of Uttarakhand have held the attention of the country for the past week. The fact, however, is these fires started in early February. Most of the damage had been done by the time the media, and therefore the Central Government, turned its attention to the disaster. Did we as a country fail in reading the calamity? Exactly how serious is this disaster? In historical perspective, not much. Around 2,000 hectares have been affected thus far in the state. In 1995, as much as 3,75,000-hectare area was scorched. In 2010, around 19,000 hectare of forests were damaged in Himachal Pradesh. But in the present context of depleted forest wealth in India, this is a major disaster, as each tree and bush counts.

Any prevention of future fires will depend on how well we understand the causes this time, and what we do with that knowledge. Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar has been quick to declare that the fires were man-made. There are others who blame timber and land mafia. But the minister needs to ensure a thorough investigation to establish the suspicion and bring about specific charges. What is indisputable, however, is the extra dry winter, followed by an early onset of summer that left the forest floors dry and inflammable. A combination of a particularly nasty El-Nino effect in 2015-16 and climate change may be blamed for that. Yes, humans are responsible for that too.

Whatever the causes, this should be a wake-up call for our priorities. Uttarakhand already has in place a system of receiving real-time satellite feedback on the forests, including fires, and passing it down to the tehsil level. The question remains what we do with this information. Some of the age-old fire prevention methods continue to be effective; it is a matter of deploying those with purpose. As many as 6,000 people were finally deployed to put out the fire. That could have come about earlier. India has a mere 21 per cent forest cover, and an equally devastated wildlife. We have reduced nature to an 'unnaturally' low level; letting fires run their natural course is now not an option.

Met predicts respite for fire-hit states

Thundershowers expected between May 3 and 6; temp to drop by two to four notches



A major fire devastates a forest near Palampur; and (below) smoke billows out of a hill in Kamrunag. PHOTOS: RAVINDER SOOD AND JAI KUMAR

VIBHA SHARMA
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, MAY 2

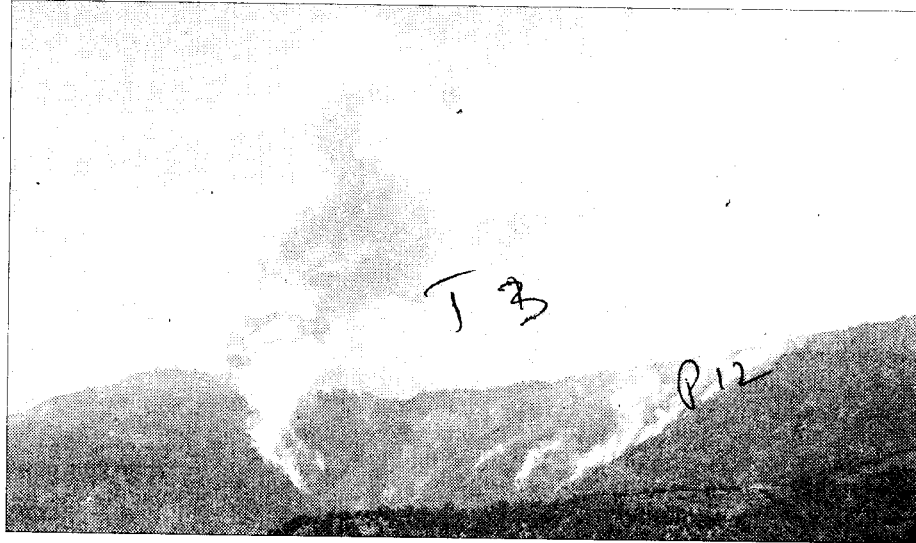
Battling forest fires, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand can expect rains and thundershowers over the next four days, beginning Tuesday. The Met office has predicted rain, thundershowers and a resultant drop in temperatures in the two forest-fire ravaged states between May 3 and May 6.

IMD Director BP Yadav said rains and thundershowers accompanied by squall or hail in Himachal, Uttarakhand and dust storms in the plains can be expected during these days (May 3 to May 6), which will significantly help lower temperatures in the northwest and help in the management of the forest fires in the hill states.

"The maximum temperature will fall by 2-4 degree Celsius due to the dust storm/thunderstorm in the region," he said.

At present, heatwave to severe heatwave conditions are prevailing in many parts of the country. Many parts of the northwest are also battling temperatures markedly above normal — 5.1 degree Celsius or more.

According to the IMD, Himachal, Rajasthan, Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh and Delhi have all been reporting either 'markedly above normal'



Northwest in grip of heatwave

■ Heatwave to severe heatwave conditions are prevailing in many parts of the country

■ Many parts of the northwest are also battling temperatures markedly above normal — 5.1 degree Celsius or more

■ According to the IMD, Himachal, Rajasthan, Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh and Delhi have all been reporting either 'markedly above normal' temperatures or 'appreciably above normal' mercury (3.1 degree Celsius to 5.0 degree Celsius)

temperatures or 'appreciably above normal' mercury (3.1 degree Celsius to 5.0 degree Celsius).

Sizzling at 44 degree Celsius, Delhi today reported the hottest day of the season so far.

While Uttarakhand and Himachal forest fires are largely being blamed on timber and land mafia, ecologists say they have been further aggravated by climate change patterns — high temperatures prevailing over a long period of time and associated wind patterns during the summer season.

Forest fires a seasonal hazard: Virbhadra

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

SHIMLA, MAY 2

Chief Minister Virbhadra Singh today said though forest fires in the middle and lower belts of the state was a seasonal hazard during the summer, steps were being taken to keep them under check. "The situation is not so severe, but during the peak summer months, fires cannot be ruled out," said Virbhadra. He said the Forest Department was taking all possible steps to keep the

fires under control and that the level of awareness among the people who helped douse the fire had also gone up.

The CM said the pine needles were inflammable and with the increasing heat, there could be cases of forest fire in areas having predominance of pine forests. There were eight forest fires, two major ones in the Mundli forest division under Anandpur panchayat falling in rural Shimla today, taking the total fires in Shimla to 44 and affecting 269 hectares.

Heatwave sweeps across lower hills

BHANU P LOHUMI
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

SHIMLA, MAY 2

Intense heatwave swept across the lower hills of the state with Una experiencing the hottest day of the season at 43.0 degree Celsius. The maximum temperature remained two to three degrees above normal and the state capital recorded a high of 29.8 degree Celsius, three degrees above normal.

The sweltering heat forced the people to stay indoors. The worst-affected were schoolchildren. Women were seen taking refuge under umbrellas while some covered themselves with dupattas.

The summer is at its peak and the tourist footfall has increased.

The Met Department has attributed the rise in temperature to the western disturbances.

The mercury surged to 39.4 degree Celsius at Sundernagar, 37.1 degree Celsius at Nahan, 35.2 degree Celsius at Bhuntar, 34.2 degree Celsius at Solan and 31.6 degree Celsius at Dharamsala. Kalpa recorded a high of 24.4 degree Celsius while Manali recorded 25 degree Celsius.

The higher reaches of Kinnaur witnessed a mild snowfall in the evening.

The minimum temperature also stayed above normal and Nahan was the hottest at 27.2 degree Celsius while Shimla and Una recorded a low of 18.8 degree Celsius and 20.0 degree Celsius.

Manali was the coldest at 4.0 degree Celsius followed by Keylong 4.8 degree Celsius, Kalpa 9.4 degree Celsius, Bhuntar 12.0 degree Celsius, Sundernagar 16.0 degree Celsius, Dharamsala 16.2 degree Celsius, Solan 17.2 degree Celsius and Palampur 18.5 degree Celsius.

The sudden rise in temperature has triggered forest fires across the state in the lower and mid hills, but the redeeming feature is that the Met office has predicted rain/thundershowers/snow at isolated places in the lower, mid and higher hills in the next five days.

Green tribunal takes on water board over waste water treatment plant at Delhi Gate ^{HT Pg 3}

HT Correspondent

htreporters@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: The National Green Tribunal on Monday severely criticised the Delhi Jal Board (DJB) over construction of a waste water treatment plant at Delhi Gate drain here and summoned its engineer to explain why untreated water was still going into the Yamuna.

A bench headed by NGT chairperson Justice Swatanter Kumar also directed the DJB to submit details regarding

planned expenditure in the current fiscal with regard to water and sewage sector.

"Why Delhi Gate drain was not properly planned? You had assured us that not a single drop of untreated water will go into Yamuna. Still 25 to 30% of waste water is going into the river. We will not allow you to waste public money like this. Enough of this joke," the bench said, while monitoring the implementation of its 'Maili se Nirmal Yamuna Revitalisation Project'.

In order to keep the Yamuna clean, the DJB had last year started trial run of its newly-constructed 15 MGD waste water treatment plant at Delhi Gate Nalla.

According to the DJB, the plant, which is odourless and functions on clean fuel, has been constructed at a cost of R204 crore.

The waste water treatment plant aims to tap highly polluted water from Old Delhi areas.

The tribunal had earlier

taken the water utility to task for spending money on Yamuna without its permission and directed it not to spend a "single penny" on rejuvenation of the river without its approval.

It had also directed the DJB not to surrender the amount allocated to it in the last fiscal for rejuvenation of the Yamuna to the Delhi government and instead spend it for implementation of its 'Maili se Nirmal Yamuna Revitalisation Project'.

News item/letter/article/editorial published on 31/5/16 in the

Hindustan Times ✓
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The Times of India (N.D.)
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Nav Bharat Times (Hindi)
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The Hindu
Rajasthan Patrika (Hindi)
Deccan Chronicle
Deccan Herald

M.P.Chronicle
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Indian Nation
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The Times of India (A)
Blitz

and documented at Bhagirath(English)& Publicity Section, CWC.

MNREGA MESS

Don't want ₹5 hike, say J'khand workers, return money to Modi

HT Correspondent

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LATEHAR (JHARKHAND): Hundreds of workers from Manika in Jharkhand on Sunday came up with a novel way of registering their protest against the meagre hike of ₹5 granted by the Union government under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA).

The workers — on the occasion of Labour Day — sent over a hundred envelopes with ₹5 notes to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, asserting that they could do without the government's "generosity".

In view of the ongoing drought, the Centre had increased the wages of workers in Jharkhand from ₹162 to ₹167. However, this failed to impress the beneficiaries, given that the minimum wage for labour and non-MNREGA work in the state comes up to ₹212.

A report in The Telegraph said the envelopes were accompanied by a sarcastic Thank-You note to Modi, in which the workers said they felt lucky to be considered eligible for the raise at all. "It sounds like MNREGA workers in Odisha are very well-off because their wages



■ In view of the drought, the Centre had increased the wages of workers in Jharkhand from ₹162 to ₹167. ARABINDA MAHAPATRA/HT

were left untouched," it said.

The note went on to express "concern" for the Centre's financial plight. "Actually, we are very concerned. The government must be really short of money as it is unable to raise MNREGA wages, and that too when one-third of the rural population is affected by drought," it said, expressing hope that the money returned would keep the Prime Minister's "corporate friends and government employees happy".

"The government has probably done us a big favour by increasing the wages. In some other states, I am told, the

increase is not even that... But we cannot accept such a raise. So we are sending the money back to the Prime Minister... Maybe he'll have some use for it," Kamlesh Oraon, a farmer, was quoted by NDTV as saying.

The workers took out a protest rally under the banner of the Grameen Swaraj Mazdoor Sangh in Manika block, where slogans denouncing the hike were raised. Members of other organisations, such as the Jharkhand Jan Sangram Morcha, Dalit Adhikar Suraksha Manch and the CPI(ML), were also present.

(With agency inputs)

Rain, thunderstorm may cool down heated India

HT Correspondents

letters@hindustantimes.com

LUCKNOW/HYDERABAD/RANCHI/HISAR/JAIPUR/SHIMLA: The country sizzled on Monday as most places recorded temperatures 5 degrees above normal. Uttar Pradesh was the hottest, with Banda recording 47.2 degrees Celsius, followed by Telangana at 46.7 degrees Celsius.

The meteorological department said temperatures in most places in India was 5.1 degrees Celsius above normal, but also forecast some respite from the intense heat wave in the coming days with rainfall accompanied by thunderstorms in some parts of the country.

However, intense heat wave will continue in most parts of Odisha and coastal Andhra Pradesh, the IMD added.

The death toll due to heat wave this season has already touched 178 in Telangana, with more deaths being reported in the last 24 hours from Nalgonda district. Four deaths have also been reported from Jharkhand.

Daltonganj district recorded the highest temperature of 45 degrees Celsius in Jharkhand. Ranchi sweated at 41.5 degrees Celsius, while Jamshedpur simmered at 44.6 degrees Celsius. "The heat wave condition may prevail for the next 24 hours in many places in Jharkhand," meteorologist Upendra Srivastava said, adding rainfall is expected on Wednesday.

Hisar in Haryana scorched on Monday, with mercury touching almost 44 degrees Celsius. Talking to HT, Dr Raj Singh, HOD, agriculture and meteorological



* A man drinks water dripping from a leaking overhead pipeline in Hyderabad on Monday.

AP PHOTO

department, said: "The temperatures recorded in Hisar district in the first week of May last year were between 37 degrees and 40 degrees Celsius." He added, "However, we have also recorded western disturbance in the atmosphere and by May 5, some places in Haryana will get rainfall."

However, there was respite in Rajasthan as the mercury dipped after a dust storm followed by mild rainfall on Monday afternoon.

According to Met department data, the maximum and minimum temperatures in Jaipur were 43.1 and 29.6 degrees Celsius. A departure of five degrees from normal was observed after the dust storm.

Even as the Met department predicted rains in the next 24 to 48 hours, Monday was the season's hottest in Himachal Pradesh.

Shimla too recorded the season's highest temperature at 29.8 degrees Celsius while maximum temperature in Himachal was recorded at Una at 43 degrees Celsius.

2 children die of thirst in Telangana

HYDERABAD: In a shocking incident, two children died of thirst while walking through a forest in Telangana's Adilabad district.

Bodies of 12-year-old Madhu and eight-year-old Ashok were found in a forest area near Muddaram village of Chennur 'mandal' on Monday, police said.

The children's mother, who had gone in search of water, was found unconscious in another place. She is said to be critical.

The woman and her children were on their way to another village, Muddaram, to attend a marriage on Sunday. They were walking through the forest when the children collapsed due to severe heat and thirst.

The mother ran around searching for water but she too collapsed in the heat. **HTC**

'Will use our share of river water at any cost'

HT Correspondent

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HYDERABAD: Telangana chief minister K Chandrasekhara Rao laid the foundation stone for the ₹84,000-crore Kaleshwaram lift irrigation project across Godavari river in Karimnagar district on Monday, ignoring objections by leaders of neighbouring Andhra Pradesh.

Jagan Mohan Reddy of YSR Congress — the principal Opposition party in Andhra Pradesh — has threatened to go on a three-day fast at Kurnool starting May 16, saying the new project by Telangana will rob Andhra of its due share of water.

However, Rao stuck to his stand and said Telangana will go ahead with the project at any cost and that the state was well within its right to use waters from both Godavari and Krishna rivers.

"Some parties are playing cheap politics. Come what may, these projects will be completed," he said.

Rao said Telangana came into existence to get its rights, including its share in irrigation and drinking water.

"Telangana was allocated 1,300-tmc of water by Andhra rulers in the united state. What we are using is the share given to us officially and as per the

Telangana was allocated 1,300 tmc of water by Andhra rulers in the united state. What we are using is the share given to us officially... We are not using anything above this. Hence, nobody needs to have any apprehensions.

K CHANDRASEKHARA RAO,
Telangana chief minister

government orders issued. We are not using anything above this and hence, nobody needs to have any apprehensions," said the chief minister.

Pointing out that water is flowing in Godavari even in the month of May and that much of the river's water is going waste into the sea, Rao said efforts by the state to utilise this water should be appreciated.

Meanwhile, the Andhra Pradesh government has decided to complain to the Centre about the irrigation projects being built "illegally" by Telangana.

The state cabinet, which met in Vijayawada on Monday, decided to write to the Centre about the projects being taken up by Telangana across Godavari and Krishna rivers.

Rainwater may trigger move emptior

LONDON, PTI: Rainwater may play an important role in the process that triggers earthquakes, according to new research.

Researchers identified the sources and fluxes of the geothermal fluids and mineral veins from the Southern Alps of New Zealand where the Pacific and Australian Plates collide along the Alpine Fault.

From careful chemical analyses, they discovered that fluids originating from the mantle, the layer below Earth's crust, and fluids derived from rainwater, are channelled up the Alpine Fault.

By calculating how much

fluid is flowing through the fault zone at depth, the researchers showed for the first time that enough rainwater is present to promote earthquake rupture on this major plate boundary fault.

"Large, continental-scale faults can cause catastrophic earthquakes, but the trigger mechanisms for major seismic events are not well known," said lead researcher Catriona Menzies, from the University of Southampton in UK.

"Geologists have long suspected that deep groundwaters may be important for the initiation of earthquakes as these fluids can weaken the fault zones by increasing pres-

ures or through chemical reactions," Menzies said.

"Fluids are important in controlling the evolution of faults between earthquake ruptures," she said.

"Chemical reactions may alter the strength and permeability of rocks, and if enough fluid is present at sufficiently high pressures they may aid earthquake rupture by 'pumping up' the fault zone," Menzies said.

The Alpine Fault is a major strike-slip fault that fails in very large (more than magnitude 8) earthquakes around every 300 years.

It last ruptured in 1717 AD and consequently it is under

intense scientific cause it is a rare major fault that strain-build up t

"We show th Fault acts as a b fluid flow from t tains of the Sou wards the Tasn west," said Men

"However, th mantle-derived that the fault channel for fluid than 35 km de to the surface,"

"As well as fluids, our calcul that 0.02-0.0 rainfall reach kilometres de



Hottest day of season at 44 deg C

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI: If Sunday saw a spike in the mercury level in the city, Monday was a scorcher.

The maximum temperature was 44 degrees Celsius, the hottest day of the season so far. It was also five degrees above normal for the first week of May.

The minimum temperature settled at 23.8 degrees Celsius, one point below the season's average.

Palam was the hottest part of the city, where the maximum temperature was a sizzling 46.2 degrees Celsius. Gurgaon also recorded a maximum of 46 degrees Celsius.

Humidity hovered between 14 per cent and 54 per cent during the day, making

it extremely dry.

The evening brought some respite from the heat as dark clouds made an appearance and gentle winds swept across the city.

But if Delhiites had thought that rain was imminent, they were disappoint-

ed as the skies cleared and the weather gods remained unrelenting.

The Met office, however, brought some cheer. It has predicted partly cloudy skies along with the possibility of a dust storm or thunderstorm on Tuesday evening or night with a maximum of 40 degrees Celsius.

Met officials said as the week progresses, temperatures are likely to fall as rain/thunderstorm accompanied by squall has been forecast.

An active western disturbance will affect the weather pattern in the plains of North-West India from May 2, the officials said, bringing rain not only to the region but also to the western Himalayas.

378 forest fires ravage Himachal, heatwave to blame

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Shimla, 2 May

As many as 378 forest fires broke out in different parts of Himachal Pradesh this summer due to inflammable parched pine needles, following dry weather and sudden rise in day temperatures.

"Fires occurred on 3,000 hectare areas, mostly in lower areas of Solan, Sirmaur, Bilaspur, Kangra, Hamirpur, Shimla and some other places but all these were ground fires caused by burning of highly inflammable dry pine needles," S P Vasudeva, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests said.

As many as 378 fires broke out in forests in different parts of the state but there was no major loss as the department is fully geared up to tackle the situation as dry pine needles will continue to fall till end of May, he said.

Vasudeva said two cement companies are already purchasing pine needles and efforts are being made to persuade other cement manufacturers to

Damage to flora & fauna raised in LS

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, 2 May

The government today claimed that forest fires in Uttarakhand were completely under control and no death was reported so far, even as

concern was voiced in the Lok Sabha over the huge damage caused to the flora and fauna in the inferno which swept through large parts of the hill state in the last one week.

The issue was raised during Zero Hour by Saugata Roy (TMC) who claimed that the fire was spreading in Himachal Pradesh

and parts of the Jammu region, while 3000 hectares in the Corbett National Park had been destroyed. He said the wild fires have also affected the Rajaji National Park.

Sharing his concern, Ramesh Pokhriyal (BJP) said the blaze has affected the habitat of the tiger and destroyed a large number of medicinal herbs and plants. He said the fire has been exacerbated by the dry weather.

Home Minister Rajnath Singh, however, said the government has been able to bring the fires under control. While members said eight persons have been killed, the Home

Minister said during interactions with the state administration, he has so far not been told of any deaths.

Mr Singh said shortly after the matter came to his knowledge, a team of his ministry and fire department rushed to the site.

"Three teams of NDRF and three IAF MI-17 helicopters were also engaged

to control the situation," he said.

He denied reports of deaths due to the fire, saying: "As far as reported deaths are concerned, local administration has not yet confirmed them," he said.

ing the 'Fire Watcher' is being done under it.

Satellite links have been provided and alerts are sent to concerned forest guards and other forest officials about fire incidents within their jurisdiction, he said.

In neighbouring Uttarakhand, NDRF has deployed

over 130 personnel as part of multiple fire fighting teams to combat the raging forest fire in the jungles of the state that have destroyed about 2,269 hectares of jungles in several districts and claimed at least seven lives till now.

HP fires not comparable with U'khand, says Virbhadra: Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Virbhadra Singh today said forest fires in his state are "not comparable" with those raging in Uttarakhand and the situation here is "fully under control".

"There is nothing unusual in forest fires occurring during summers but the situation (in Himachal) is not like (that in) Uttarakhand where IAF choppers have been pressed into service to douse the fire," he said.

He said these fires are caused by burning of highly-inflammable dry pine needles, which sometimes occur due to negligence and in some cases villagers deliberately set them on fire to get good crop of grass, used as fodder.

buy the pine needles in bulk as these are used in the furniture.

He said a meeting with cement manufacturers is slated for May 7.

The department had made preparations in advance with existing fire lines cleared and new ones created by March.

750 local fire watchers were deputed by April 15 to immediately inform about any fire incident in the forests, the Chief Conservator said.

Centrally sponsored 'Intensive Forest Management Scheme' has been launched and the task of creating fire lines and deput-

दिल्ली का भेजा फ्राई

टैक्सी वालों के विरोध प्रदर्शन से सड़कों पर लगा जाम

✱ एनबीटी टीम, नई दिल्ली

दिल्ली में रेकॉर्ड गर्मी के बीच टैक्सी ड्राइवरों ने सोमवार को राजधानी और आसपास की बिजी सड़कों को ब्लॉक कर दिया, जिससे जगह-जगह जाम लग गया। वे पेट्रोल और डीजल टैक्सियों पर सुप्रीम कोर्ट की पाबंदी के बाद अपने खिलाफ हुई कार्रवाई से खफा थे। सोमवार को 141 टैक्सियों का चालान किया गया। नेशनल हाइवे-8 (दिल्ली-जयपुर) और रिंग रोड पर टैक्सी ड्राइवरों के प्रदर्शन की वजह से हफ्ते के पहले वर्किंग डे पर ट्रैफिक इंटरजाम ध्वस्त हो गया। स्कूल जाने वाले बच्चों और ऑफिस जाने वाले लोगों को बेहद परेशानी हुई।

एक ट्रैफिक अधिकारी के मुताबिक, प्रदर्शनकारियों के एक ग्रुप ने सुबह एनएच-8 के पास रजोकरी टोल बूथ पर कई किलोमीटर तक जाम लगा दिया। धौला कुआं, कापसहेड़ा और महारौली पर भी यातायात बाधित रहा और कई घंटे तक हालात बदतर रहे। परेशान यात्री लगातार ट्रैफिक हेल्पलाइन पर फोन करते रहे। प्रदर्शनकारियों ने रिंग रोड पर आश्रम चौक के पास महारानी बाग जाने वाले दोनों रूटों पर जाम लगा दिया। सराय काले खां, आश्रम, पीजीडीएच कॉलेज के पास नेहरू नगर, लाजपत नगर और मूलचंद से एम्स तक ट्रैफिक ठप रहा। लाला लाजपत राय मार्ग, डिफेंस कॉलोनी और मथुरा रोड समेत कई वैकल्पिक रूट्स पर भी लोगों को कई घंटे तक जाम झेलना पड़ा। डीएनडी फ्लाईओवर भी गाड़ियों की कतारें लगी रहीं। ▶ पेज 3, 4



पिछले 6 साल में 2 मई का दिन सबसे गर्म रहा, जिससे हाल-बेहाल था

सरकार कोर्ट जाएगी

केंद्रीय परिवहन मंत्री नितिन गडकरी ने कहा है कि हम कोर्ट से आग्रह करेंगे कि वह डीजल टैक्सियों पर पाबंदी के फैसले पर दोबारा गौर करें। गडकरी ने सोमवार को संबंधित मंत्रालयों की इमरजेंसी मीटिंग बुलाई।

हेल्पलाइन पर शिकायत

टैक्सी में मनमाना किराया वसूले जाने पर दिल्ली सरकार ने सोमवार को हेल्पलाइन नंबर जारी किया। परिवहन मंत्री गोपाल राय ने ट्वीट कर बताया कि 011-42400400 पर शिकायत दर्ज कराएं।

Forest fires in U'khand could melt glaciers faster: Experts

Black Carbon May Raise Heat, Pollute Rivers

Vineet Upadhyay
@timesgroup.com

Nainital: Raging forest fires in Uttarakhand could have a devastating effect on the state's glaciers which are the lifeline of the major rivers flowing through India's northern plains. According to experts at Nainital's Aryabhata Research Institute for Observational Sciences (ARIES) and Govind Ballabh Pant Institute of Himalayan Environment and Development (GBPIED) in Almora, 'black carbon' from the smog and ash is covering the glaciers, thereby making



State Disaster Response Force personnel battle the flames in Rudrapur

them prone to melting.

Elaborating on what he termed a 'long lasting effect' of the fires, Manish Kumar, a senior scientist at the atmospheres department in ARIES, told TOI, "Black carbon is formed by the incomplete combustion of fossil fuels, biofuels and biomass. It absorbs light and increases heat, which is why it can cause glaciers to melt faster."

Water in the rivers which originate from these glaciers also stand to get heavily polluted by harmful particles and compounds that constitute black carbon, Kumar said.

According to experts, forest fires have already resulted in a jump of 0.2 degrees Celsius in temperatures across northern India which can have a detrimental effect on the monsoons. "Black carbon floats in air for a long time and gets deposited on clouds interfering with the normal cycle of the monsoons," said Kirit Kumar, a scientist from Govind Bal-

Cop killed during firefighting op

Police constable Pankaj Chauhan, 26, was reported to have been killed when boulders fell on him while he was dousing a fire on the outskirts of Chamoli town, 250km from the state capital. He was rushed to the district hospital where he was declared dead on arrival. Meanwhile, state and central officials, including Union home minister Rajnath Singh, claimed that the fire situation is now under control. **P 15**

labh Pant Institute of Himalayan Environment and Development, Almora. Other experts, however, said the interaction of black carbon with clouds was complex and could have varied effects.

The glaciers which are most at risk, according to Kumar of ARIES, are those situated at relatively low altitudes like Gangotri, Milam,

Tourism biz hit as visitors stay away

Hill stations in Uttarakhand draw thousands of tourists every summer. This year, though, forest fires are deterring travellers. "We have had a large number of cancellations, and there are hardly any inquiries for bookings in the upcoming peak season," said Ashish Arora, who runs a resort in Nainital district. That's added to the woes of hoteliers, who incurred heavy losses after the 2013 floods. **INSIDE FLAP**

Sundardunga, Newla and Cheepa, which are also the source of many rivers. In order to study the effect the fires are having on these glaciers, a team of scientists from GBPIED would soon undertake a trip to these heights.

Pointing out why the scientific community was getting increasingly concerned as the fires have kept on rag-

Timber mafia under suspicion

The forest fires have so far caused damage worth over Rs 2,500 crore, with reports that a nexus of villagers and timber mafia could be behind the blaze. A preliminary report suggests that the fire started following the routine burning of fallen leaves and forest areas by villagers. But the fire went out of control due to the hot weather and dry vegetation and could not be doused before it engulfed a larger area. **P 15**

ing in the forests, Kirit Kumar said, "In normal circumstances, glaciers act as mirrors reflecting most of the light and heat. This is known as 'albedo'. But when black carbon gets deposited on them, it results in their absorbing all the light and heat which eventually results in their meltdown. This is a serious concern."

News item/letter/article/editorial published on May 02, 2016 in the

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The Times of India (N.D.)

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Nav Bharat Times (Hindi)

Punjab Keshari (Hindi)

The Hindu

Rajasthan Patrika (Hindi)

Deccan Chronicle

Deccan Herald

M.P. Chronicle

A a j (Hindi)

Indian Nation

Nai Duniya (Hindi)

The Times of India (A)

Blitz

and documented at Bhagirath(English)& Publicity Section, CWC.

Floods, Now Fire

Mobilise all resources to fight raging forest fires in Uttarakhand

Raging forest fires that have devoured more than 2,500 hectares of land in Uttarakhand have shown up huge gaps in the hill state's capacity to prevent calamities. The Uttarakhand fire may have had natural causes but the environmental catastrophe has been exacerbated by the state's slow response. The loss of precious wildlife, thousands of trees, and three human lives is a direct consequence. Worryingly, jungle fires are now spreading to Himachal Pradesh and Jammu & Kashmir.

Though forest fires have only made the headlines now, extremely dry weather has meant that large jungle swathes have intermittently been on fire since February, annihilating flora and fauna in 13 districts and threatening to consume Corbett and Rajaji National Parks. It is only now that seven IAF choppers and three army battalions have been pressed into service, along with NDRF. Six thousand personnel have been mobilised. Environment minister Prakash Javadekar says that the first aim is to reduce some 1,200 fires to just 60.



First, with no customary and intermittent rains in April this year, the Uttarakhand administration ought to have cleared dry leaves and highly combustible pine needles in advance. Second, several Uttarakhand environmentalists and activists are blaming timber and land mafia for what they allege are "man-made" fires. If these allegations are indeed true, exemplary punishments must be meted out to guilty officials. Mismanagement of relief and rehabilitation work by the Uttarakhand government after the 2013 floods, which killed over 5,000 people, is still fresh in the minds of the people. Haphazard urbanisation with utter disregard for environmental norms and a land mafia-local administration nexus has led to India facing an unprecedented challenge of depleting forest cover, exacerbated by climate change. According to the latest estimates, there is a 25% shortage of forest personnel in the country.

The government must fix these lacunae at the earliest. It is saying it will study the cause for such huge fires before preparing an action plan. This is insufficient and highlights a lackadaisical approach to an acute problem which has already reached emergency proportions. The top priority now must be to douse the fires before they spread further, for which all resources must be mobilised. Given that President's rule was recently declared in Uttarakhand it is squarely the Centre's baby, all the more so because the Centre can best coordinate with neighbouring states where the fires are raging too.

द्रव्यवती नदी को चमकाने का काम आखिरकार शुरू



द्रव्यवती नदी यानी अमानीशाह नाले के सौंदर्यन के लिए मंगलवार से कार्य शुरू हो गया।

श्यामनगर में भी विकास कार्य शुरू

जयपुर @ पत्रिका. द्रव्यवती नदी (अमानीशाह नाला) को चमकाने का काम आखिर शुरू हो गया। अनुबंधित कंपनी टाटा प्रोजेक्ट्स ने रिद्धि-सिद्धि पुलिया से महारानी फार्म के बीच लेवलिंग व पानी का बहाव बीच में करने का काम शुरू कर दिया है। इसमें अभी 210 फीट चौड़ाई के मध्य हिस्से की चौड़ाई बढ़ाई जा रही है। इससे पानी को बहाव एक तरफ कर दोनों हिस्सों में सौन्दर्यीकरण का प्लान बनाया जाएगा। श्याम नगर में भी

काम शुरू किया जा रहा है। जेडीए अधिकारियों के मुताबिक पर्यावरणीय स्वीकृति से पहले लेवलिंग की जा रही है, फिर निर्माण कार्य होगा। पर्यावरणीय स्वीकृति के लिए सर्वे का काम भी साथ में किया जा रहा है।

कंपनी को 1523 करोड़ रुपए लागत से 30 माह (सितम्बर, 2018) में काम पूरा करना होगा। नाहरगढ़ की पहाड़ियों से गोनेर के बीच 47.5 किलोमीटर लम्बी नदी के किनारों पर कॉमर्सियल पार्क, कल्चरल प्लाजा, फ्लोटिंग गार्ड से लेकर फैशन स्ट्रीट जैसी सुविधाएं मुहैया कराने का दावा किया है।

यूं होगा काम

- 47.5** किमी लम्बी है द्रव्यवती नदी
- 150** से 210 मीटर है चौड़ाई
- 16** किमी नदी के प्रवाह क्षेत्र के दोनों तरफ सड़क के लिए जमीन उपलब्ध
- 5.5** मीटर चौड़ाई में होगा सड़क निर्माण प्रवाह क्षेत्र के दोनों तरफ
- 04** मीटर चौड़ा होगा पाथ-वे
- 02** मीटर चौड़ाई में सीढ़ियां व हरित पट्टी
- 11** सीवरेज ट्रीटमेंट प्लांट बनेंगे

आसमान से बरसी आग : दिल्ली में पाया 46° पार

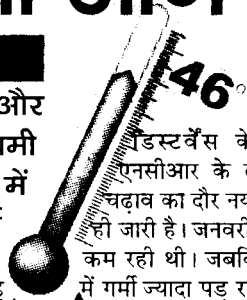
ब्यूरो/नई दिल्ली

सोमवार का दिन दिल्ली एनसीआर में सीजन का सबसे गरम दिन रहा है। आज अधिकतम पारा जहां 46 डिग्री तक पहुंच गया वहीं बताया जा रहा है कि न्यूनतम पारा 26 डिग्री तक पहुंचने की खबर है। जबकि रविवार को अधिकतम तापमान 42 डिग्री तथा न्यूनतम 22 डिग्री दर्ज किया गया है। मौसम विभाग के मुताबिक वैस्टर्न डिस्ट्रिक्ट्स के चलते इस बार अभी तक तापमान सामान्य से ऊपर ही रहा है।

सबसे गर्म दिन

आने वाले दिनों में अभी और गर्म हवाएं चलेंगी : पश्चिमी विक्षोभ के चलते दिल्ली में मौसम ने पकड़ी गर्मी

लगातार बढ़ रही गर्मी से पूरे पखवाड़े राहत की उम्मीद नहीं है। अलबत्ता इस पखवाड़े में आसमान में बादल छाने का बूदाबांदी से लोगों को थोड़ी राहत जस्स



मिल सकती है। मौसम विभाग के मुताबिक वेस्टर्न डिस्ट्रिक्ट्स के चलते दिल्ली एनसीआर के तापमान में उतार-चढ़ाव का दौर नया साल शुरू होने से ही जारी है। जनवरी में अपेक्षाकृत ठंड कम रही थी। जबकि इस बार गर्मियों में गर्मी ज्यादा पड़ रही है।

मौसम वैज्ञानिकों के मुताबिक वैस्टर्न डिस्ट्रिक्ट्स का दौर अभी जारी रहेगा। इसके चलते पूरे पखवाड़े तापमान चालीस डिग्री

से कम होने वाला नहीं है। अलबत्ता इस दौरान सर्वाधिक तापमान बारह व तेरह मई को 45 तथा 46 तक पहुंच सकता है। जबकि आठ मई के बाद तेरह मई तक कहीं धीमी व कहीं तेज बूदा-बांदी हो सकती है।

इसके अलावा आने वाले दिनों में तापमान में और बढ़ोत्तरी से मौसम विभाग ने इंकार नहीं किया है। मौसम वैज्ञानिकों का मानना है कि हफ्ते बाद संभवतः राहत की खबर मिलेगी, जबकि डाक्टरों ने लोगों को धूप से दूर रहकर

बचाव करने की अपील की है।

शुरू हो गया लू का दौर: लगातार बढ़ रहे तापमान का असर अब दिल्ली-एनसीआर की हवा में भी दिख रहा है। गर्म हवा के साथ जहां लू का दौर चल पड़ा है, वहीं पशु-पक्षियों पर भी इसका असर दिख रहा है। दिन के वक्त लोग गर्मी से बचने के लिए सिर पर कपड़ा इस्तेमाल करते दिखे हैं।

जैसलमेर में पारा 52° पार देखें पृष्ठ 2 पर

जंगलों की आग

उत्तराखंड के जंगलों में लगी भीषण आग पर तो अब तक काबू नहीं ही पाया जा सका है, साथ में हिमाचल प्रदेश और जम्मू-कश्मीर के जंगलों में भी आग फैल जाने की खबरें आने लगी हैं। उत्तराखंड में इसका स्वरूप कुछ ज्यादा ही विनाशकारी है। वहां 2500 हेक्टेयर से ज्यादा इलाके का जंगल यह आग लील चुकी है। स्थितियों की गंभीरता का अंदाजा इस बात से लगाया जा सकता है कि अलग-अलग विभागों के 10 हजार



से ज्यादा लोग आग बुझाने के मिशन में लगाए गए हैं। आर्मी और एयरफोर्स के लोग भी बड़ी संख्या में इस काम लगे हुए हैं। हेलिकॉप्टरों के जरिए पानी बरसाया जा रहा है, फिर भी ये उपाय नाकाफी साबित हो रहे हैं। रविवार को कहा जा रहा था कि

70 फीसदी हिस्से में आग बुझा ली गई है, लेकिन बाद में सैटलाइट तस्वीरों से पता चला कि पिछले 24 घंटे में स्थिति और बदतर हो गई। हेलिकॉप्टरों के इस्तेमाल के बावजूद पानी से आग बुझाने का पारंपरिक तरीका इस मामले में कारगर नहीं साबित हो रहा है। वजह है आग का व्यापक फैलाव। एक हिस्से में पानी आग को कुछ काबू करता दिखता भी है तो दूसरे हिस्से में वह बनी रहती है और मौका मिलने पर दोबारा फैल जाती है। फिलहाल भीमताल और कुछ अन्य झीलों, जलाशयों से पानी लाया जा रहा है, लेकिन उत्तराखंड में सूखे के हालात को देखते हुए इन स्थानों से कब तक पानी निकालना संभव होगा, कुछ कहा नहीं जा सकता। स्थानीय स्तर पर पानी निकालने का विरोध भी हो सकता है। बहरहाल, कोशिशें जारी हैं। कहा जा रहा है कि जल्द ही हालात को काबू में कर लिया जाएगा। लेकिन ऐसा लगता है कि अभी सबसे ज्यादा उम्मीद मौसम से लगाई जा रही है। अगले एक-दो दिनों में ही उत्तराखंड में वेस्टर्न डिस्टर्बेंस से थोड़ी बारिश की संभावना जताई जा रही है। ऐसा हो गया तो अभी की कोशिशें कारगर साबित हो सकती हैं। लेकिन वन संपदा और वन्यजीवों के भारी विनाश के बाद यह तो साबित हो ही गया है कि जंगल की आग से निपटने की हमारी कोई तैयारी नहीं है। ग्लोबल वार्मिंग के चलते आगे ऐसी घटनाओं की फ्रीक्वेंसी बढ़नी तय है, लिहाजा बड़े दायरे की आग से लड़ने की आधुनिकतम व्यवस्था हमें अभी ही कर लेनी चाहिए।

अकेले हिमाचल में आग की 378 घटनाएं हिमाचल-जम्मू में दहके जंगल



■ प्रस/एजेंसियां, चंडीगढ़/जम्मू

उत्तराखंड के जंगलों में लगी भीषण आग अभी बुझाई नहीं जा सकी है कि दूसरे पहाड़ी राज्यों के जंगलों में भी आग लगने की खबर आ रही है। मीडिया रिपोर्ट्स के मुताबिक हिमाचल और जम्मू के जंगलों में भी आग लग गई है। हिमाचल में लगी आग ने सैकड़ों एकड़ जंगल को जला डाला है। हिमाचल में कई जगह धुएं के गुबार दिखाई दे रहे हैं। पिछले कुछ दिनों के दौरान अलग-अलग इलाकों में फैली आग के कारण चार लोगों की मौत की भी सूचना है। चंडीगढ़-शिमला नेशनल हाइवे पर धर्मपुर के जंगलों में भी सोमवार को आग लगी।

सोलन के पास लगी इस आग की वजह से UNESCO की ओर से विश्व धरोहर घोषित किए गए रेलवे ट्रैक को भी नुकसान पहुंचा है। जलती लकड़ियां ट्रैक पर गिरने से ट्रेनों की आवाजाही रुकी है। जम्मू कश्मीर के राजौरी और हिमाचल के शिमला और नाहन के जंगलों में आग का कहर देखने को मिल रहा है। इन दोनों जगहों पर भी आग को बुझाने की कोशिश चल रही है।

आग की 378 घटनाएं : हिमाचल के प्रधान वन्य संरक्षक एस पी वासुदेव ने बताया कि 3000 हेक्टेयर इलाके में, अधिकतर सोलन, सिरमौर, बिलासपुर, कांगड़ा, हमीरपुर, शिमला के निचले इलाकों और कुछ अन्य भागों में आग लगी। लेकिन सभी जगहों पर आग देवदार पेड़ से सूखकर गिरी सुइयों के गुच्छों जैसी टहनियों के तत्काल

सरकार ने किए उपाय

- भीषण गर्मी के मौसम में वन कर्मियों की छुट्टियां 30 जून तक रद्द कर दी गईं।
- आग की मुख्य वजह चीड़ के कांटों को चुनने के लिए स्थानीय लोगों को भी लगाया गया है।
- ग्रामीण चीड़ के कांटों को जमाकर सीमेंट कंपनियों को 1.65 रुपये प्रति किलोग्राम की दर से बेच देते हैं।

हेक्टेयर में वनस्पतियां और वन्यजीव तबाह हो गए हैं। वासुदेव के मुताबिक, देवदार की सूखी टहनियां मई के अंत तक गिरती रहेंगी। दो सीमेंट कंपनियां भट्टी में इस्तेमाल के लिए देवदार की सूखी टहनियां खरीदती हैं और कोशिश हो रही है कि अन्य सीमेंट कंपनियां भी थोक में इसकी खरीद करें।

उत्तराखंड से तुलना नहीं : हिमाचल के सीएम वीरभद्र सिंह ने कहा है कि हिमाचल के विभिन्न जंगलों में लगी आग की तुलना उत्तराखंड में लगी आग से नहीं हो सकती। हिमाचल में स्थिति उत्तराखंड की तरह नहीं है, जहां आग बुझाने के लिए वायुसेना के हेलिकॉप्टरों को सेवा में लगाना पड़ा। वन मंत्री ठाकुर सिंह भरमौरी ने कहा कि जंगलों की निगरानी 24 घंटे सैटेलाइट से करने के कदम उठाए जा रहे हैं।

उत्तराखंड : आग से निपटने पर कोर्ट ने उठाए सवाल

सरकार से मांगा जवाब

■ प्रस/एजेंसियां, देहरादून/नई दिल्ली

उत्तराखंड हाई कोर्ट ने राज्य में जंगल की आग पर केंद्र और राज्य सरकार से 6 मई तक विस्तृत जवाब मांगा है। इस मामले में अब अगली सुनवाई 9 मई को होगी। कोर्ट ने जंगल की आग का संज्ञान लेते हुए जनहित याचिका के रूप में सुनवाई का फैसला लिया था। साथ ही वन विभाग और राज्य सरकार को जवाब दाखिल करने को कहा था। राज्य सरकार ने कोर्ट को आग बुझाने के लिए किए जा रहे उपायों की जानकारी दी मगर कोर्ट संतुष्ट नहीं हुआ। हाई कोर्ट ने सरकार को आदेश दिए कि जंगलों में चाल खाल का निर्माण किया जाए।

कोर्ट के सवाल

- 2005 की राज्य आपदा प्रबंधन नीति और केंद्र की नीति में क्या है अंतर।
- नासा की जो वेबसाइट आग दुर्घटना प्रभावित इलाकों पर नजर रखती है, क्या इसकी यूनिट उत्तराखंड में है। यदि है तो यूनिट ने क्या काम किया। यदि नहीं तो क्यों नहीं।
- आग बुझाने में लगे कर्मियों को प्रतिदिन मात्र 162 रुपये क्यों दिए जा रहे हैं। इससे अधिक क्यों नहीं।
- आग से कितने पेड़ जले, कितना इलाका प्रभावित है।

उत्तराखंड में आग बुझाने के लिए

एनडीआरएफ की टीम कूदी जरूर है मगर जानकारी के अनुसार एनडीआरएफ के पास आग बुझाने के लिए कोई खास एक्सपर्ट टीम नहीं है। दरअसल आग का मामला राज्यों का विषय है। (विस)



हालात पर इन तरीकों से किया जा रहा है काबू

जमीन पर...

एनडीआरएफ की 10-15 लोगों की तीन टीमों में प्रभावित इलाकों में तैनात। 1 टीम कुमाऊं और 2 गढ़वाल इलाके में आग

बुझाने के काम में जुटी। इसके अलावा लगभग 200 लोग प्रभावित इलाकों से लोगों और जंगली जानवरों को बचाने में जुटे हैं।

नुकसान

अब तक आग की घटनाओं में 7 लोगों की मौत।

2000 हेक्टेयर से ज्यादा इलाका जलकर खाक।

राहत

70% इलाके में अब आग बुझा ली गई है।

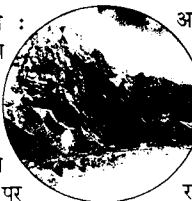
मंगलवार को राज्य में बारिश होने के आसार।

विदेश में ये है तैयारी

- जमीन पर फायरफाइटर आग लगे हिस्से के दायरे में हर सौ फीट पर पानी का पाइप बिछा देते हैं।
- बाकी कू या बुलडोजर अब आग के बाहरी किनारों पर फायर ब्रेक बनाते हैं। फायर ब्रेक का मतलब जमीन के ऐसे हिस्से से है जहां पर सूखी पतियां या घास न हो।
- कभी-कभी फायर फाइटर्स को सीमित दायरे में आग भी लगानी पड़ती है ताकि जंगल की आग की दिशा बदली जा सके।
- हेलिकॉप्टर भी आग लगी जगह पर ऊपर से पानी या आग बुझाने वाले झाग का छिड़काव करते हैं।
- सैटेलाइट और ड्रोन से भी राहत कार्य की निगरानी की जाती है।

आग का ग्लेशियर पर पड़ेगा असर

■ एनबीटी ब्यूरो, देहरादून/नई दिल्ली : उत्तराखंड के जंगलों में लगी आग ने पर्यावरण को बहुत ज्यादा नुकसान पहुंचाया है। 4 से 5 महानगर एक साल में जितना एनवायरनमेंट को नुकसान पहुंचा सकते हैं, उसकी तुलना में एक से दो घंटे में ही उत्तराखंड की आग ने पर्यावरण को नुकसान पहुंचाया है। इससे ओजोन लेयर पर सीधे तौर पर असर पड़ता है।



स्काइमेट के मौसम वैज्ञानिक महेश पलावत ने कहा, 'उत्तराखंड जैसी घटनाएं ग्लोबल वॉर्मिंग को और भी ज्यादा

असर डालेंगी। इससे ग्लोबल वॉर्मिंग बढ़ेगी और ग्लेशियर पर असर पड़ेगा। इस तरह की एक्टिविटी को कंट्रोल करने के लिए जिस जगह पर आग लगी है वहां पर बड़ी संख्या में पेड़ लगाने चाहिए। साथ ही अवेयरनेस फैलाने की भी बहुत ज्यादा जरूरत है।' दूसरी ओर, आग से निकल रही कार्बन डाईऑक्साइड से ग्लेशियर पर खतरा पैदा हो गया है। वाडिया संस्थान के हिमनद विशेषज्ञ डॉ. डी.पी. डोभाल के अनुसार बारिश होगी तो कार्बन के कण ग्लेशियर की परत पर बैठ जाएंगे और पिघलने की दर बढ़ा देंगे।

आपात योजना बनी

■ प्रस, देहरादून : जंगलों में लगने वाली आग से निपटने के लिए सरकार ने एक आपात योजना तैयार की है। इस पर राज्यों की मदद से अमल किया जा रहा है। राज्यसभा में पर्यावरण राज्यमंत्री प्रकाश जावड़ेकर ने सोमवार को एक सवाल के जवाब में यह जानकारी दी। उन्होंने कहा कि पिछले साल के शुरुआती चार महीनों की तुलना में इस बार जंगलों में आग लगने की घटनाएं ज्यादा हुई हैं। इस साल 21 अप्रैल तक जंगलों में आग लगने की 20667 घटनाएं हुईं, जबकि पिछले साल ऐसे मामलों की संख्या 15937 थी। 2014 में ऐसे मामलों की संख्या 19054 और 2013 में 18451 रही। उन्होंने फॉरेस्ट सर्वे ऑफ इंडिया के आंकड़ों का हवाला देते हुए यह जानकारी दी।

बारिश दिलाएगी गर्मी से

टेंपरेचर पहुंचा 46 डिग्री सेल्सियस के पार, बदलेगा मौसम



अगले तीन दिनों तक दिल्ली के कई इलाकों में आंधी चलने के साथ हल्की बूदाबांदी भी होने की संभावना है।

■ नगर संवाददाता, नई दिल्ली

मई के शुरुआती दिनों में ही हीट वेव ने दस्तक दे दी है। सोमवार को पालम में मैक्सिमम टेंपरेचर नॉर्मल से 7 डिग्री ज्यादा के साथ 46.2 डिग्री सेल्सियस दर्ज किया गया। यह इस सीजन का सबसे ज्यादा मैक्सिमम टेंपरेचर था।

वहीं, सफदरजंग में मैक्सिमम टेंपरेचर 44 डिग्री सेल्सियस दर्ज किया गया, जो नॉर्मल से पांच डिग्री सेल्सियस ज्यादा था। इससे पहले, संडे को अधिकतम तापमान सफदरजंग में 42 डिग्री और

पालम में 44.2 डिग्री दर्ज किया गया था। मौसम विभाग के मुताबिक, मौसम के लगातार ड्राई रहने की वजह से टेंपरेचर 46 के पार पहुंचा है। वेस्टर्न डिस्टर्बेंस का असर नहीं हो पाया, जिससे गर्मी से राहत नहीं मिल पाई। उन्होंने बताया कि अप्रैल महीने में लगातार मौसम ड्राई रहा।

मौसम विभाग का कहना, मौसम रहा ड्राई जिससे टेंपरेचर बढ़ा

मौसम विभाग से जारी आंकड़े बताते हैं कि 2 मई पिछले 6 सालों में सबसे गर्म रहा। इससे पहले 2 मई का मैक्सिमम टेंपरेचर सफदरजंग में साल 2010 में 40 डिग्री, 2011 में 41 डिग्री,

2012 में 36 डिग्री, 2013 में 39 डिग्री, 2014 में 38 डिग्री और 2015 में 38 डिग्री सेल्सियस दर्ज किया गया।

दिल्ली में में कई जगहों पर मैक्सिमम टेंपरेचर 43 डिग्री सेल्सियस दर्ज किया गया। मैक्सिमम टेंपरेचर लोदी रोड में 44.2, दिल्ली रिज में 45.4, गुड़गांव में 46, फरीदाबाद में 43.7, जाफरपुर में 44.6, नजफगढ़ में 44.6, नोएडा में 44.4 और अक्षरधाम में 44.1 डिग्री सेल्सियस दर्ज किया गया। वहीं सफदरजंग में मिनिमम टेंपरेचर नॉर्मल से एक डिग्री सेल्सियस कम के साथ 23.8 डिग्री सेल्सियस दर्ज किया गया। वहीं ह्यूमिडिटी का लेवल भी कम दर्ज किया गया। यह 54 पसैंट थी।

‘आएंगी नमी वाली हवाएं’ : मौसम वैज्ञानिक आर. विशन ने बताया कि दिल्ली में आने वाले दिनों में धूल भरी आंधी चलने की संभावना है। अगले तीन दिनों तक आंधी चलने के साथ हल्की बूदाबांदी भी होने की संभावना है। साथ ही बढ़ते तापमान से भी राहत मिलने के आसार हैं। आंधी चलने के साथ बारिश होने से तापमान गिर सकता है। वहीं, स्काइमेट के मौसम वैज्ञानिक महेश पलावत ने बताया कि बंगाल की खाड़ी और अरब सागर से दिल्ली की तरफ नमी वाली हवाएं दस्तक देंगी। इससे मौसम का मिजाज बदल सकता है। मौसम वैज्ञानिकों के मुताबिक, दिल्ली के साथ-साथ आसपास के राज्यों में भी मौसम बदल सकता है।

The Times of India

Title : INDIA'S NO-DROUGHT VILLAGES - Saving raindrops for thirty years

Author : Sharma Saurabh

Location :

Article Date : 05/01/2016

Even as parts of the country buckle under drought, a few resourceful villages have managed to keep their head above water.

From a Marathwada village that has water ATMs, to another in Rajasthan that revived a traditional water harvesting system, to hamlets in MP that doughtily changed farming habits, Sunday Times looks at how collective action has done what powerful governments couldn't

Long queues for government-supplied water tankers are a common summer sight in most parts of Rajasthan. But in Laporiya, a village 80 km from Jaipur, a collective effort to harvest water by 350 families has been defying drought for the past 30 years. While ground water has gone down to 500 feet in nearby areas, it is found at 15-40 feet in this village. Not only does lush Laporiya have enough water for its population of nearly 2,000, it even supplies water to some 10-15 surrounding villages.

This journey from scarcity to self-sufficiency started in 1977 when an 18-year-old Laxman Singh returned to his village only to find that it gripped by poverty, caste conflicts and malnourishment. The school dropout realized that the only way to stop this vicious cycle of misfortune was to make the area agriculturally prosperous. But water was a big problem - it was available at a depth of 100 feet. "Back then, there were hardly any means to pump out water at such a depth. I decided that if we cannot go down, the water has to come up," said Singh. He then devised the chowka system based on a traditional method of water harvesting in Rajasthan and founded the nonprofit organization Gram Vikas Navyuvak Mandal Laporiya (GVNML). Under the chowka system, small, interconnected, sloping rectangular pits, nine inches deep, are made in pasture land. The pits are bordered with bunds (mud embankment). As water assembles in one chowka it flows into an adjacent chowka and then spreads evenly because of the bunds. After crossing several such chowkas, water finally moves into a pond. This method of preserving rainwater makes the top layer of soil moist, recharges ground water, and also enables growth of native grasses and shrubs.

Over 15 years, the chowka system was developed on about 400 bighas of pasture land. The villagers came together and contributed money and labour to make the bunds. With the soil gaining moisture, villagers were able to harvest their rabi crop without irrigating their fields. "As there is no withdrawal of ground water for the rabi crop, it gets recharged and is used during summers," said Chotu Singh, a farmer.

There's been some smart crop planning too. Villagers stay away from water-intensive crops. During summer, cultivation of only green fodder and vegetables is allowed and that too in fields that are close to the well.

The discipline reaped some additional benefits. As the pasture land got green, animals started getting enough fodder. An indigenous breed of cow (Gir) was brought from Gujarat and dairy farming was promoted. Gir produces 8-10 litres of milk in a day and each house now has at least two of them. "Each household makes about Rs 30,000 -45,000 a month by selling milk. It's more for those who have over five cows," said Arjun Singh, a volunteer of GVNML.

The example has now been followed by 58 neighboring villages and is now spreading to other districts.



HOW THEY DID IT

- Adopted traditional water harvesting system
- Stayed away from water-intensive crops

» TODAY'S PAPER » NATIONAL

Published: May 3, 2016 00:00 IST | Updated: May 3, 2016 05:49 IST KOCHI, May 3, 2016

Western Ghats under threat: Report

- [K.S. Sudhi](#)



in peril: Harmful activities include oil and gas exploration, extraction, mining and illegal logging.— FILE Photo: K. K. Mustafah

Many natural and mixed World Heritage Sites, including the Western Ghats, are threatened by harmful industrial activities such as mining, says a report.

The harmful industrial activities include oil and gas exploration and extraction, mining, illegal logging and large-scale constructions, according to the report, 'Protecting people through nature,' prepared by the World Wildlife Fund and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

Three of the seven such Indian sites — Manas Wildlife Sanctuary, Sundarbans, and the serial sites of Western Ghats — have been listed as being under threat.

The report highlights that the Western Ghats support "the single largest population of endangered Asian elephants and vulnerable Indian bison."

The report concludes that "nearly half of all natural World Heritage Sites, including the Grand Canyon and the Great Barrier Reef, are threatened by industrial activities." The data for the study was drawn from the IUCN's World Heritage Outlook.

On Western Ghats, the report says the sites are facing "extractive threats" in the form of "oil and gas concessions" and "mines and mining concessions." The Manas Wildlife Sanctuary faces unsustainable water use whereas Sundarbans has issues related to water management. The survey estimates that 11 million people directly depend on the World Heritage Sites for food, water, shelter, and medicine. The harmful industrial development poses a threat to these 'ecosystem services and the communities that depend on them.'

Responding to the assessment, V.B. Mathur, Director, Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun, said the methodology of the report and its outcome were too generic in nature.

Manas sanctuary and Sunderbans from India figure on the global list

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